

# Rare clans book sold in Edinburgh

**A rare surviving complete copy of the first lavishly illustrated encyclopedia of the Scottish clans, dedicated to Queen Victoria, has fetched more than £1,000 at auction.**

James Logan's *The Clans of the Scottish Highlands* was published in London in 1845 to commemorate the centenary of the last Jacobite uprising.

Scottish actor-turned artist R.R. McIan produced 72 images of clansmen for the book, in two large volumes, which is now regarded as the most complete record of Highland dress of the day.

Dedicated to Queen Victoria with her consent, the book, which was available only on subscription, fed a romanticised vision of Scotland created by the work of Sir Walter Scott.

It may even have helped inspire Prince Albert to buy Balmoral Castle in 1852 after its previous owner, Sir Robert Gordon, died.

The rare complete first edition went under the hammer at Bonhams in Edinburgh, where it was sold to a private collector for £1,088.

Gordon McFarlan, director, Bonhams Edinburgh, said "Logan and McIan's work was published a century after the Jacobite

rising, at a time when Sir Walter Scott had revived interest in Scotland and the Highlands.

“It was produced in two volumes, which would have been found in the grand country houses and libraries of the aristocracy.

“Inside, the list of subscribers includes the Queen and Prince Albert. There is every reason to think they took a great interest in it, and it may well have helped to inspire the purchase of Balmoral.

“Historically, a lot of these grand volumes would have been broken up and individual plates framed and hung on the wall so it is even rarer to find a complete first edition like this.”

The Clans of the Scottish Highlands emerged at a time when Sir Walter Scott had helped create a romantic view of Scotland. After King George IV’s historic visit in 1822 – stage managed by Scott – tartan became almost instantly popular.

Scots scholar James Logan described the Highland dress as “undeniably the most picturesque and original costume in Europe”.

Robert Ronald McIan, who left Scotland in his late teens to become an actor in London, gained a reputation for playing Highlanders on the stage but gave up acting to paint. He is said to have employed actor friends to model for his clan pictures.









J. G. & Co. print.

Edinburgh, 44.

CLAWNAHALD.

London: Published by Wilson, Pringle & Co., Regent St.  
1841. G. & W. Colburn.